

The Father Effect

Research shows that **babies do better when fathers are involved** in the lives of pregnant mothers.



African American babies are **twice as likely** to die in the first year of life as are Caucasian babies.ⁱ

2x

Fathers do make a difference!

The risk of death for an African American baby whose father is involved is **70% lower** than for a baby whose father is not involved.ⁱⁱ

Give your baby a healthy start in life. Get involved early and often.



Before birth: Keep your partner healthy.

Encourage her to:



Go to all recommended doctor visits



Take folic acid



Avoid drinking, smoking, and drug use



Maintain a healthy diet



Reduce stress



Stay physically active

After birth: Keep an eye out for postpartum depression.

Postpartum depression is a mood disorder that can affect a woman after she gives birth.



Watch for signs

Make sure you know the symptoms, like:

- Extreme sadness, anxiety, and hopelessness
- Avoiding friends and family
- Difficulty completing daily care activities for themselves or the baby



Know where to get help

Encourage your partner to seek help and talk with a health care provider.



Offer support

Offer emotional support and help with daily tasks.



ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HHS. (2012). CDC Wonder. Linked Birth/Infant Death Records 2007-2011. Retrieved January 2, 2015, from <http://wonder.cdc.gov/lbd.html>.

ⁱⁱ Alio, A.P., Mbah, A.K., Kornosky, J.L., Wathington, D., Marty, P.J., Salihi, H.M. (2011). Assessing the impact of paternal involvement on racial/ethnic disparities in infant mortality rates. *Journal of Community Health, 36*(1), 63-68.

Keep baby safe during sleep.

Reduce your baby's risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related causes of infant death.

1. Always place baby on his or her back to sleep, for naps and at night.

2. Use a firm sleep surface, such as a mattress in a safety-approved* crib, bassinet, or play yard, covered by a fitted sheet.



3. Room share—keep baby's sleep area in the same room where parents sleep, next to their bed.

4. Keep soft objects, toys, crib bumpers, and loose bedding out of the baby's sleep area.

* For information on crib safety guidelines, call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772, or visit <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Centers/cribs/>.



To learn more about how you can make a difference, visit:

- Safe sleep for baby: <http://safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov>
- Postpartum depression: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/postpartum-depression-facts/>
- A healthy pregnancy: <http://go.usa.gov/zv6h>



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